HYDROGEOCHEMICAL ANALYSIS OF GROUNDWATER WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO ARSENIC CONTAMINATION IN PATHALKUDWA, RANCHI DISTRICT

SYNOPSIS

Submitted

For the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (Ph.D.)

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RANCHI UNIVERSITY, RANCHI

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1. INTRODUCTION

The area under investigation Pathalkudwa is a sublocality in Nayatoli, Ranchi, Ranchi, district, Jharkhand, India. Ranchi district lies in the southern part of Jharkhand state. The district is bounded on the north by Ramgarh & Hazaribagh districts, on the south by Khunti & Saraikela Kharsawan, on the west by Gumla, Latehar & Lohardagga district and on the east by Saraikela Kharsawan and Purulia district of West Bengal. It is connected through NH-33 from prominent district headquarters of the state. It is also connected through Gumla and Rourkela by NH-23. The district has total area of 5097 sq.km. and is located between 22° 52'- 23° 45' North latitude to 84° 45'- 85° 50' East longitude.

Drainage- Nearest river to Pathalkudwa is River Subarnarekha. The district is highly dissected by rivers of varying magnitude. The major water divide in the district runs north to south direction through the Ratu and Lodhma. The area in the eastern part of the water divide is drained by Subarnarekha and the western part of the divide is drained by South Koel and Karo. The important river basins are the, the South Koel, the Damodar and the Karkari. The Kanchi and Raru are the tributaries of river Subarnarekha. The South Koel originates from Piska near Ranchi. The Karkari river drains the southeastern part of the district.

Climate- Ranchi district experiences subtropical climate, which is characterized by hot summer from March to May and well distributed rainfall during southwest monsoon from June to October. Winter season in the area is marked by dry and cold weather during the month of November to February.

Rainfall- The normal annual rainfall data indicate that average rainfall is 1394mm. Maximum rainfall has been observed from June to October months. About 90% of the total annual rainfall is received in the monsoon period.

Geomorphology— The northernmost and southernmost parts of the district are covered with hillocks and forests. Altitude of the area varies from 500m to 700m above mean sea level in general. There are many hillocks through the district having altitude 700m above mean sea level. The district is the part of Chotanagpur plateau.

Soils— The soils of the district are mostly of the residual type. High temperature and high rainfall have led to the formation of lateritic type of soils from rocks of Archean metamorphic complex exposed in the greater part of the district.

1.1 GENERAL GEOLOGY AND TOPOGRAPHY

Ranchi lies at 23.35°N latitude & 85.33°E longitude. The total municipal area of the district is 175.12 square kilometres. The average elevation is 651 m /2140 feet above sea level.

The Ranchi city is located in the southern part of the Chota Nagpur plateau. The main river system is Subarnarekha, South Koel and its tributaries. Dams have been developed on the channels Rukka, Kanke and Hatia to create reservoirs which supply water to the city's population. There are many beautiful waterfalls in and around Ranchi, like Dassam Falls, Hundru Falls, Hirni Falls, Jonha Falls and Panchghagh Falls, thus it is also called the "City of Waterfalls."

Ranchi has a hilly topography and dense tropical forests. The covered forest area of the district is approximately 159.14 hectares.

The reddish soil found in this region is mainly formed by the disintegration of rocks and stones. Ranchi has a wealth of mineral resources like Mica, Fire Clay & Lime Stone, etc

GEOLOGY- Jharkhand state a part of the Indian peninsular shield is a stable cratonic block of the earth's crust. Geologically, Jharkhand consists of different type of rock formation ranging from Pre Cambrian to Cenozoic era. The most predominant hard rock in the state comprises of the Archean metamorphic with associated intrusive and sedimentaries belonging to Vindhyan and Gondwana supergroup with the associated igneous rocks. The archean metamorphic occur in east and west Singhbhum, Ranchi, Gumla, Lohardaga, Palamau, Deoghar, Giridih, Hazaribagh, Chatra, Ramgarh, Dhanbad, Godda, and Dumka district. They are represented by various schist, gneisses, granulite, quartzites, metabasic and other basic intrusive granites. Structurally, the state can be divided into Southern Singhbhum Provinces and Northern Chotanagpur Provinces divided by Tamar Khatra Fault popularly called Singhbhum thrust zone which is also a storehouse of several important mineral.

General geological succession

Lataerite and lateritc soil

Quartz vein

Aplite

Pegmatites of three generation

Chotanagpur granite/granite gneiss

Amphibolites- basic intrusive rock

Crystalline limestone- meta sedimentary rock

Khondalite

Quartzite

Mica schist

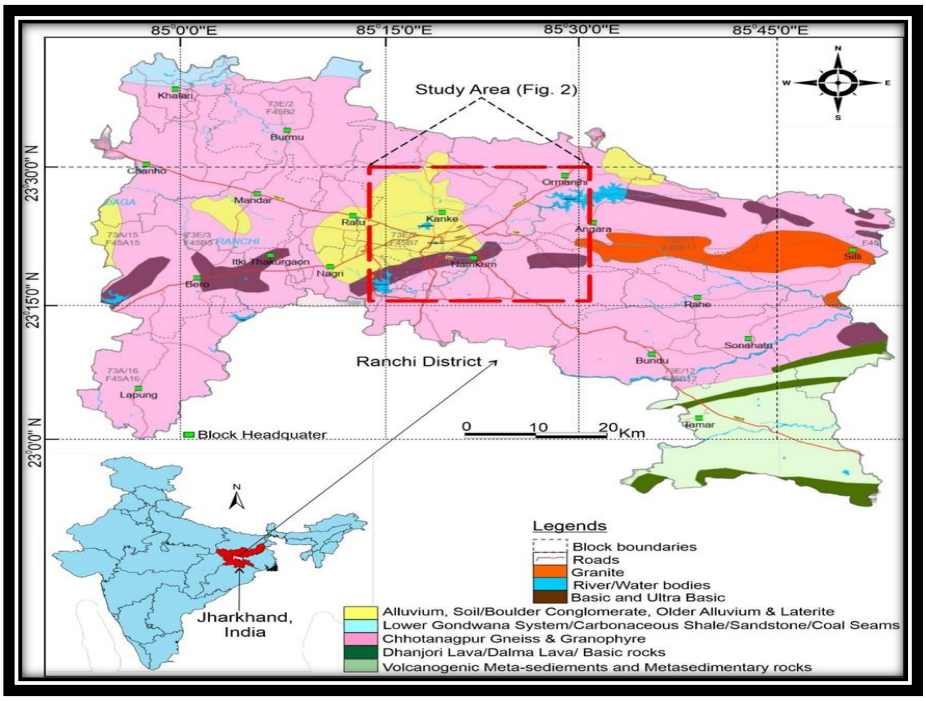
The rocks of Ranchi area formed from the oldest geological formations. these rocks are represented by Dharwar sediments being later intruded by the batholithic mass of Chotanagpur granite, which were metamorphosed into various types of schistose and gneissic rocks. Physiographically, Ranchi area can be divided into three distinct units:

Northern region- potpotto jumar basin

Central region- menadu khunti upland

Southern region- flat peneplain

Average elevation is 2040 feet. These areas consist of a chain of dome shaped hills of gneissic rock. The important hills are Gnessic Gonda, Tagore hill, Argora hill, Hehal hills and Rifle range which is the highest point of Ranchi. The peneplain flat is Jagannath hill upto Tagore hill.



General geology and geological map of Ranchi district, Jharkhand.

1.2 LOCATION AND ACCESIBILITY

National Highways reachable to Pathalkudwa:

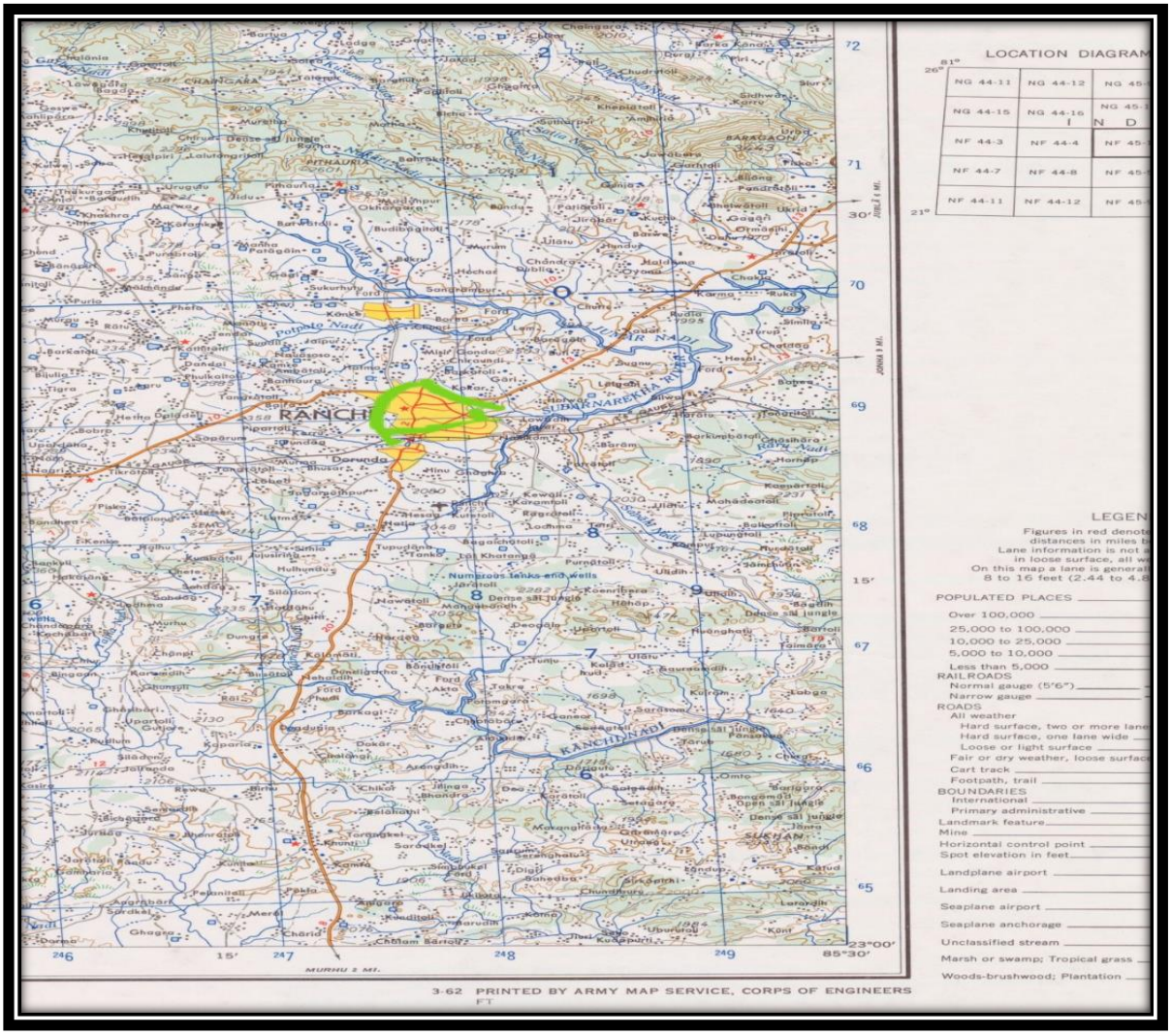
National High Way: NH43

National High Way: NH20, NH43

Nayatoli (0.0 Km), Kanka (1.54 Km), Lalpur (2.41 Km), Ashok Nagar (4.17 Km), Doranda (4.32 Km) are the nearby areas to Pathalkudwa.

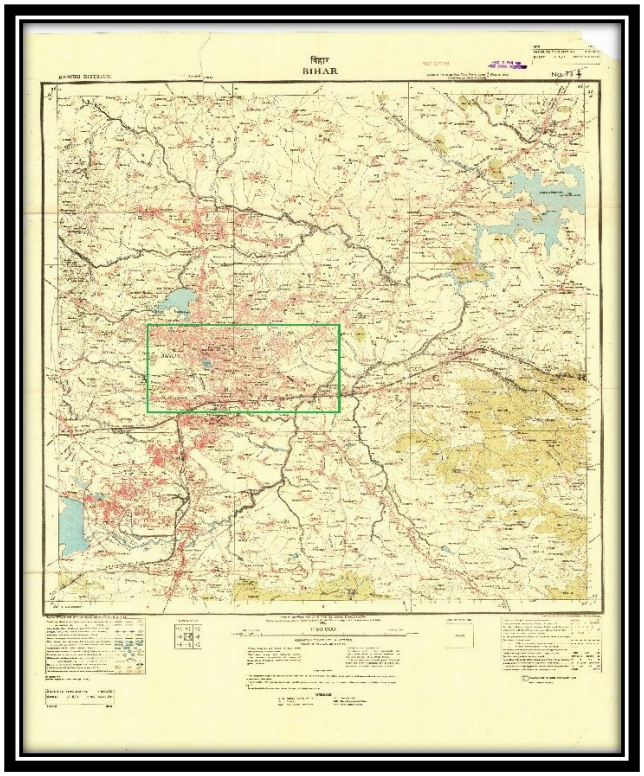
Ranchi Junction Rail Way Station , Argora Rail Way Station are the very nearby railway station to Pathalkudwa.

The area Pathalkudwa has a longitude 23°22’1.92” N and longitude 85°19’47.28” E. The area is located on Survey of India Toposheet no. 73 E/7.



Study area (Reference India and Pakistan AMA Topographic Maps, NF 45-1 Ranchi)

Study area on Survey of India Toposheet no 73 E/7.



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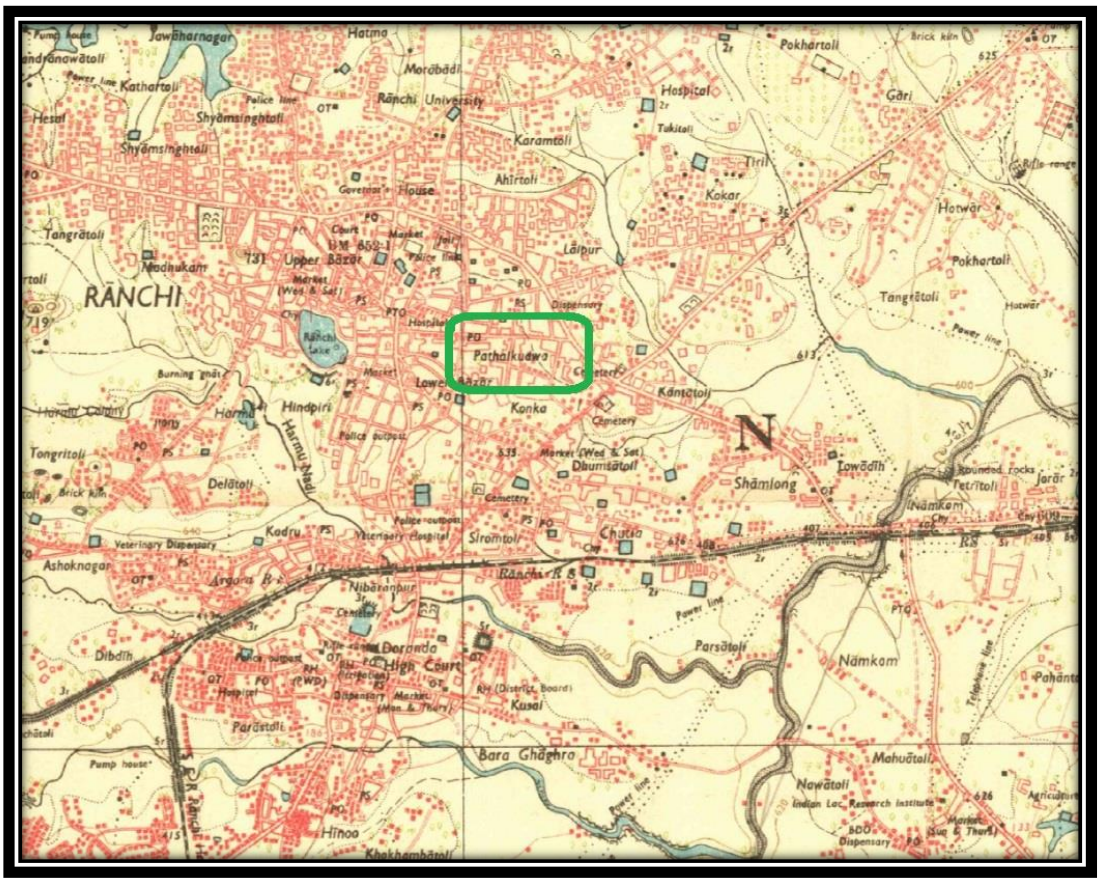

2. STATE OF THE ART

Arsenic contamination in groundwater has emerged as a significant global health concern, affecting millions of people worldwide. The ingestion of arsenic-contaminated water poses severe health risks, including cancer, skin lesions, cardiovascular diseases, and developmental issues. Addressing this problem requires a comprehensive understanding of the sources, mechanisms, and mitigation strategies associated with arsenic contamination.

investigating arsenic contamination in groundwater involves a combination of cutting-edge techniques and interdisciplinary approaches. Here's the state of the art in this field:

1. **Detection Methods**: Advances in analytical techniques have enabled more accurate and sensitive detection of arsenic in various environmental matrices such as water, soil, and air.
2. **Source Identification**: Researchers are focusing on identifying and characterizing the sources of arsenic contamination, which can include natural processes like geological weathering or anthropogenic activities such as mining, industrial discharge, and the use of arsenic-containing pesticides.
3. **Geochemical Cycling**: Understanding the geochemical cycling of arsenic in the environment is crucial for predicting its behavior and distribution. This involves studying factors such as adsorption-desorption processes, redox transformations, and microbial interaction.
4. **Risk Assessment and Management**: Risk assessment models are continually evolving to better estimate the potential health risks associated with arsenic exposure. These models consider factors such as exposure pathways, dose-response relationships, and vulnerable populations.
5. **Remote Sensing and GIS**: Remote sensing technologies, coupled with geographic information systems (GIS), are increasingly used for mapping and monitoring arsenic contamination over large spatial scales.
6. **Health Impacts:** Research on the health effects of arsenic exposure continues to advance, exploring both acute and chronic effects on human health.

7. **Policy and Regulation**: Efforts to mitigate arsenic contamination often involve the development and enforcement of regulatory standards for arsenic in drinking water, food, and other environmental media. These standards are informed by scientific research and aim to protect public health.
8. **Community Engagement and Education**: Community engagement and education initiatives play a vital role in raising awareness about arsenic contamination, empowering affected communities to participate in mitigation efforts, and promoting safe water practices.

3. PROBLEMS TO BE INVESTIGATED

Some key problems to be investigated:

1. **Spatial and Temporal Variability:** Characterize the spatial distribution and temporal variability of arsenic contamination within the area, including hotspots of contamination, seasonal fluctuations, and long-term trends, to identify areas of highest risk and prioritize remediation efforts.
2. **Source Identification:** Determine the sources of arsenic contamination in the area, including natural geological sources, anthropogenic activities such as mining, industrial discharge, agricultural runoff, and wastewater disposal, to elucidate the pathways of arsenic mobilization and entry into the environment.
3. **Hydrogeochemical Processes:** Investigate the complex hydrogeochemical processes governing the behaviour of arsenic in the groundwater system, including redox reactions, sorption-desorption phenomena, mineral dissolution-precipitation, microbial transformations, and their interactions with hydrological factors such as groundwater flow, recharge-discharge patterns, and aquifer heterogeneity.
4. **Climate Change Impacts:** Investigate the influence of climate change on groundwater quality and arsenic contamination in the sample area.
5. **Health Impacts:** Assess the health effects of arsenic exposure on the population residing in the affected area, including the prevalence of arsenic-related diseases such as skin lesions, respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular diseases, neurological disorders, and various types of

cancer, as well as the socio-economic implications and health disparities among vulnerable groups.

6. **Environmental Impacts:** Evaluate the ecological consequences of arsenic contamination on terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems, including impacts on soil quality, plant health, microbial communities, biodiversity, aquatic biota, and ecosystem services such as water purification, nutrient cycling, and habitat provision.
7. **Mitigation Strategies:** Develop and evaluate mitigation and remediation strategies to address arsenic contamination in groundwater.

4. OBJECTIVE OF THE INVESTIGATION AND MOTIVATION

Some key objectives:

1. **Assessment of Contamination Levels:** Determine the extent and severity of arsenic contamination in the area by conducting thorough sampling and analysis of groundwater, surface water.
2. **Identification of Contamination Sources:** Investigate the sources and pathways of arsenic contamination, including natural geological sources, industrial activities, agricultural practices, and anthropogenic pollution, to understand the underlying causes.
3. **Characterization of Health Impacts:** Assess the health risks associated with arsenic exposure among the population residing in the affected area, including the prevalence of arsenic-related diseases and health disparities among vulnerable groups.
4. **Evaluation of Environmental Impacts:** Investigate the ecological consequences of arsenic contamination on aquatic ecosystems, soil quality, biodiversity, and ecosystem services to quantify the environmental risks and prioritize conservation efforts.
5. **Understanding Hydrogeochemical Processes:** Explore the hydrogeochemical processes governing the mobilization, transport, and fate of arsenic in the groundwater system, including geochemical reactions, sorption-desorption phenomena, and microbial transformations.

6. **Understanding Climate-Contamination Interactions:** Another objective is to understand the interactions between climate change and arsenic contamination in groundwater. By conducting hydrogeochemical analyses under varying climatic conditions, the study aims to elucidate how changes in precipitation, temperature, and hydrological processes may affect groundwater dynamics and influence arsenic mobilization, transport, and fate in the subsurface environment.
7. **Development of Remediation Strategies:** Investigate and evaluate various remediation technologies and strategies for mitigating arsenic contamination, such as adsorption, filtration, precipitation, oxidation-reduction, phytoremediation, and engineered treatment systems.
8. **Optimization of Treatment Methods:** Optimize the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of arsenic remediation technologies through laboratory experiments, field trials, and pilot-scale studies to develop practical solutions tailored to the specific characteristics of the contaminated site.

The motivation for studying hydrogeochemical analysis of groundwater concerning arsenic contamination in the area can stem from various factors, each highlighting the importance and urgency of addressing this critical issue:

1. **Public Health Concerns:** Arsenic contamination poses significant health risks to the population exposed to contaminated water sources.
2. **Environmental Sustainability:** Contaminated water sources can harm aquatic ecosystems, disrupt ecological balance, and contaminate soil and agricultural produce. Studying arsenic contamination is motivated by the need to preserve environmental integrity and promote sustainable land and water management practices.
3. **Community Welfare:** Communities residing in areas affected by arsenic contamination often face social and economic challenges. Addressing arsenic contamination can contribute to community empowerment, improved living standards, and enhanced socio-economic resilience.
4. **Scientific Inquiry:** Studying arsenic contamination provides opportunities for scientific exploration, innovation, and advancement in fields such as geochemistry, hydrogeology, environmental engineering, and public health.

5. HYPOTHESIS

1. **Geological Hypothesis:** The primary source of arsenic contamination in the area is geological in origin, with elevated concentrations of arsenic naturally occurring in the bedrock or sedimentary formations underlying the aquifer.
2. **Anthropogenic Hypothesis:** Arsenic contamination in the area is primarily attributed to anthropogenic activities such as mining, industrial discharge, agricultural practices (e.g., pesticide use, irrigation with contaminated water), and improper disposal of industrial and domestic waste.
3. **Climate Change hypothesis:** Climate change alters precipitation patterns, evaporation rates, and groundwater recharge rates, leading to changes in hydrological processes that can affect arsenic mobilization and transport in groundwater. Increased droughts and reduced groundwater recharge can exacerbate arsenic contamination by concentrating arsenic levels in groundwater due to reduced dilution effects.
4. **Redox Hypothesis:** Arsenic mobilization and release into groundwater are influenced by redox conditions, with reducing environments promoting the dissolution of arsenic-bearing minerals and the subsequent mobilization of arsenic into solution.
5. **Aquifer Heterogeneity Hypothesis:** Variations in aquifer properties such as hydraulic conductivity, porosity, and mineralogy contribute to spatial variability in arsenic contamination, with certain zones exhibiting higher concentrations due to preferential flow pathways and geochemical reactions.
6. **Seasonal Variation Hypothesis:** Arsenic concentrations in groundwater exhibit seasonal fluctuations, with higher levels during the dry season due to reduced dilution effects from rainfall and increased groundwater extraction for irrigation and domestic use.
7. **Microbial Mediation Hypothesis:** Microbial activity plays a significant role in arsenic cycling and speciation, with microbial processes influencing arsenic mobilization, transformation, and immobilization in the subsurface environment.
8. **Land-Use Change Hypothesis:** Changes in land use and land cover, such as deforestation, urbanization, and agricultural intensification, alter

hydrological pathways and biogeochemical cycles, leading to increased arsenic mobilization and contamination in groundwater.

9. **Co-Contaminant Interaction Hypothesis:** The presence of co-contaminants such as iron, manganese, sulfur, and organic matter influences arsenic behavior and mobility through complex interactions, including competition for sorption sites, redox reactions, and microbial transformations.

6. Research Design and Methodology

Here's a comprehensive research design and methodology:

- **Study Area Selection:**
  - Identify and select an area known or suspected to be affected by arsenic contamination based on previous studies, historical data, and local knowledge.
- **Sampling Design:**
  - Determine the spatial distribution and extent of sampling locations within the study area using a systematic or stratified sampling approach.
  - Collect groundwater, surface water, samples from representative sites, including contaminated and uncontaminated areas, to assess spatial variability and contamination levels.
- **Data Collection Methods:**
  - Collect water samples using clean, pre-rinsed containers and filter them immediately onsite to remove particulate matter.
  - Document site-specific information, including GPS coordinates, land use, geological characteristics, well depth, and groundwater abstraction rates.
- **Analytical Techniques:**
  - Perform geochemical analyses to characterize the hydrogeochemical properties of water samples.

7. Tools to be used in the collection of data

Here are some essential tools commonly used in arsenic contamination research:

1. Water Quality Meters
2. Field Sampling Equipment:

- Water samplers- Collect surface water samples from rivers, lakes, and ponds for arsenic concentration analysis.

3. Sample Containers

- Clean bottles: Used for collecting water samples, ensuring minimal contamination during sample collection.

4. Field Testing Kits
5. Geospatial Tools

- Global Positioning System (GPS) devices: Used to record the coordinates of sampling locations.

6. Laboratory Equipment and Instruments

8. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Here's a closer look at the significance of this research:

1. **Human Health Protection:** Helps identify vulnerable populations, assess exposure risks, and implement measures to prevent adverse health effects, ultimately safeguarding public health and improving quality of life as arsenic contamination in drinking water is a major public health concern worldwide
2. **Environmental Preservation:** Assess its ecological impacts, understand ecosystem resilience, and develop strategies to protect environmental integrity, promoting sustainable ecosystems and biodiversity conservation as contaminated water sources poses risks to ecosystems and biodiversity.
3. **Water Resource Management:** Understanding the sources, pathways, and fate of arsenic in groundwater helps manage water resources effectively, mitigate contamination risks, and ensure access to safe and reliable drinking water supplies for present and future generations.
4. **Climate Change Resilience:** Climate change exacerbates existing challenges related to groundwater contamination, including arsenic contamination. Changes in precipitation patterns, temperature regimes,

and hydrological cycles influence groundwater dynamics and contamination risks in the sample area. Studying hydrogeochemical processes under changing climatic conditions can enhance our understanding of climate change impacts on groundwater resources and inform adaptive strategies to mitigate contamination risks and build resilience to climate variability.

5. **Socio-Economic Implications:** Arsenic contamination can have significant socio-economic implications, particularly in rural and marginalized communities heavily reliant on groundwater for drinking, agriculture, and livelihoods.
6. **Scientific Advancement:** Arsenic contamination presents complex scientific challenges involving hydrogeochemical processes, geochemical interactions, and remediation technologies. This research drives the development of novel approaches for arsenic detection, treatment, and management, leading to more effective solutions for mitigating contamination risks and improving environmental sustainability.
7. **Regulatory Compliance and Policy Development:** Research findings on arsenic contamination provide scientific evidence, data-driven insights, and risk assessments essential for setting water quality guidelines, monitoring protocols, and regulatory compliance measures. This research informs policy formulation, regulatory enforcement, and decision-making processes at local, national, and international levels, driving legislative actions and institutional reforms to address arsenic contamination effectively.

9. ITS RELEVANCE TO THE PRESENT DAY PROBLEM AND NEED OF THE SOCIETY

Arsenic contamination remains a pressing and relevant issue in present-day society due to its wide-ranging impacts on public health, environmental sustainability, and socio-economic development. Here's why arsenic contamination continues to be a significant problem and a pressing need for society:

1. **Public Health Crisis:** Chronic exposure to arsenic can lead to various health problems, including skin lesions, cancers (such as skin, lung, bladder, and kidney cancer), cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and neurological

disorders. Despite efforts to mitigate contamination, many communities still lack access to safe drinking water, highlighting the urgent need for continued research and intervention to protect public health.

2. **Environmental Degradation:** Arsenic contamination has profound environmental implications, including the degradation of aquatic ecosystems, loss of biodiversity, and contamination of soil and agricultural produce. Groundwater contaminated with arsenic can leach into surface water bodies, affecting aquatic organisms and disrupting ecosystem dynamics.
3. **Water Resource Management Challenges:** Arsenic contamination compromises the quality and availability of groundwater resources, which are essential for drinking water supplies, irrigation, and industrial processes. Balancing water needs with contamination risks requires innovative solutions, sustainable water management practices, and effective regulatory frameworks to ensure equitable access to safe and reliable water resources for all.
4. **Vulnerable Communities and Social Justice:** Arsenic contamination disproportionately affects vulnerable and marginalized communities, including rural populations, indigenous peoples, and low-income households. Addressing arsenic contamination is essential for promoting social justice, reducing health disparities, and empowering communities to exercise their right to safe and clean water.
5. **Technological Innovation and Solutions:** Research on arsenic contamination drives technological innovation and the development of effective solutions for detection, treatment, and mitigation. Continued research and investment in innovation are essential for scaling up these solutions, making them accessible and affordable for communities affected by arsenic contamination.
6. **Policy and Governance:** Strengthening regulatory enforcement, monitoring programs, and public health interventions is essential for preventing arsenic exposure and mitigating its adverse effects.

In conclusion, arsenic contamination remains a significant and relevant problem in present-day society, with far-reaching implications for public health, environmental sustainability, and social justice. Addressing arsenic contamination requires concerted efforts from researchers, policymakers,

communities, and stakeholders to develop innovative solutions, enact effective policies, and ensure access to safe and clean water resources for all members of society.

10. CONTRIBUTION TO THE EXISTING KNOWLEDGE

Studying arsenic contamination contributes significantly to existing knowledge by advancing our understanding of its sources, behavior, impacts, and mitigation strategies. Here's how research on arsenic contamination enhances existing knowledge:

1. **Source Identification:** Research helps identify the sources of arsenic contamination, including natural geological sources and anthropogenic activities such as mining, industrial discharge, and agricultural practices. By pinpointing the origins of arsenic pollution, researchers can develop targeted interventions to prevent further contamination and protect vulnerable populations.
2. **Hydrogeochemical Processes:** Investigating the hydrogeochemical processes governing arsenic mobility, speciation, and fate in groundwater systems enhances our understanding of complex geochemical reactions.
3. **Health Impacts:** Research on arsenic contamination contributes to the characterization of health risks and exposure pathways associated with arsenic exposure, informing risk assessments, epidemiological studies, and public health interventions.
4. **Environmental Impacts:** Investigating the ecological consequences of arsenic contamination on aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems helps assess the risks to biodiversity, ecosystem services, and ecosystem resilience.
5. **Remediation Technologies:** By testing and optimizing remediation methods, researchers can develop cost-effective, scalable, and environmentally friendly solutions for mitigating arsenic contamination in contaminated sites.

- **Risk Assessment and Management:** Research on arsenic contamination contributes to the development of risk assessment frameworks, exposure models, and management strategies for identifying and prioritizing at-risk populations, assessing exposure pathways, and implementing preventive measures.

6. **Community Engagement and Capacity Building:** By empowering communities to participate in research, monitoring, and mitigation efforts, researchers can promote social equity, build resilience, and enhance community capacity to manage arsenic contamination effectively.

11. FUTURE WORK

Here are several potential avenues for future work in this field:

1.Emerging Contamination Sources: Investigate emerging sources of arsenic contamination in groundwater, such as industrial activities, mining operations, unconventional oil and gas extraction, and emerging contaminants of concern (e.g., pharmaceuticals, personal care products) and develop strategies for their prevention and mitigation.

2.Climate Change Impacts: Evaluate the resilience of aquifers and groundwater resources to climate-induced stressors and identify adaptation strategies to minimize the vulnerability of communities to arsenic contamination under changing climatic conditions.

3. Arsenic Speciation and Transformation: Investigate the speciation, mobility, and transformation of arsenic species in groundwater, considering factors such as redox conditions, microbial activity, and geochemical interactions.

4. Impact on Vulnerable Populations: Explore the socio-economic, cultural, and health implications of arsenic contamination on vulnerable populations, including rural communities, indigenous peoples, and low-income households.

5. Innovative Remediation Technologies: Develop and evaluate innovative remediation technologies for arsenic-contaminated groundwater, including nano-scale materials, electrochemical processes, and bioremediation approaches.

6.Multi-Stakeholder Collaboration: Foster multi-stakeholder collaboration and participatory approaches in arsenic contamination research, involving local communities, indigenous knowledge holders, governmental agencies, non-governmental organizations, academia, and industry stakeholders.

7. Big Data and Artificial Intelligence: Harness big data analytics, machine learning, and artificial intelligence techniques to analyze large datasets, model complex hydrogeochemical processes, and predict arsenic contamination risks.

8. Policy Innovation and Governance Reform: Advocate for policy innovation and governance reform to address arsenic contamination at local, national, and global levels.

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